

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Kenneth K. M. Ling

Kenneth K. M. Ling, son of James and Esther Ling was born in Honolulu on July 31, 1939. His father was a shipyard worker, his mother, a dressmaker.

He attended Mānoa, Island Paradise, and 'Iolani schools. He played football at 'Iolani (class of 1958) and at Linfield College (class of 1962). He earned a graduate degree in social work from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 1965.

Following his graduation from UH, he began a fifteen-year career at Pālama Settlement. He was a coach with the Pākōlea Program and a supervisor for social services.

In 1979, he worked briefly for Catholic Charities. In 1980, he was a program specialist with the state's Family Court. A year later, he became superintendent of the state juvenile detention facility on Alder Street. Since 1985 he has served as Family Court Director.

He is married to Karel Gregg Ling whom he met in college. They raised five children and have eight grandchildren.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kenneth K.M. Ling (KL)

Honolulu, Hawai'i

February 5, 1998

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Kenneth Ling for the Pālama Settlement oral history project on February 5, 1998, and we're at his office in Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Ling, why don't you first tell me when and where you were born?

KL: Okay, I was born in Honolulu, Hawai'i in 1939.

WN: What's your birthdate?

KL: July 31, 1939.

WN: Where in Honolulu did you grow up?

KL: I grew up---my childhood was in East Mānoa. Then we moved to Date Street and then my parents moved to Moanalua. But that was already when I was in college.

WN: Oh, okay. So most of your childhood was spent where? Date Street?

KL: Date Street was from about uh, let's see. Fourth grade on is from when we were on Date Street.

WN: Okay, so now, what were your parents doing? What kind of work did your father do?

KL: My father [James Ling] worked at the naval shipyard as a chipper and caulker. My mother [Esther Ling] was a---what do you call?---what they call a cutter for dressmaking stores.

WN: So you said he was a chipper and a cutter?

KL: A caulker.

WN: A caulker.

KL: It's really---they worked on the ships in terms of if there was any damage they would go ahead and fix it up. Then worked on the submarines in particular to provide. . . . You know, if

there's any leaks, they would go in and fix it.

And my mother would help the designer when they would cut out dressmaking and then provide that kind of. . . . Supervise the seamstress in many of the different, at that time, Hawaiian wear stores like Sydneys, Bubba K. I don't know if you know those names.

WN: No.

KL: Okay, they were big designers of Hawaiian clothes at that time. So, she did that.

WN: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

KL: I have one sister who is four years younger than me.

WN: And that's it?

KL: That's it.

WN: Okay. What was it like growing up in East Mānoa?

KL: It was fun. I can recall the open spaces when I was young. There was, at that time, they had just built the public housing, East Mānoa, in that area, and we were just on the fringe of it in private housing, but it was carefree days. We enjoyed being in East Mānoa.

WN: Do you know why you folks moved to Date Street?

KL: Yeah, because we were given an opportunity to get a bigger home as well as—we were, at that time, renting from my aunt so it was. . . . And it was more convenient for my mother who worked in the Waikīkī area, so we did move there.

WN: You remember a big difference between Mānoa and Date Street?

KL: Yeah. Date Street became much more commercialized and the area was smaller although much more convenient to, you know, the bus line was right in front of our house, so that was a positive. And the closeness of the homes was much more evident in the Date Street area.

WN: Was it pretty much a mixed neighborhood?

KL: Yeah, it was. Certainly it was a mixed neighborhood that we had at the time.

WN: You were right near the stadium too huh?

KL: Uh, yeah, yeah. It was in walking distance, if I really wanted to walk. I mean, it would be a little walk, but yeah, we could do it. It was close to—where I lived anyway—I could walk to school. I got a scholarship to go to 'Iolani [School]. So when I became high school age, I did go to 'Iolani.

WN: So prior to 'Iolani what school did you go to?

KL: Initially, it was to, certainly East Mānoa elementary [Mānoa School]. I started there, and then I

transferred to Island Paradise [School], which is a private school near Pensacola [on Pi'ikoi Street]. Then from there, after I finished grade school there---I also stayed with Island Paradise because they had an annex, which was in town, near the old Chinese Mun Lun School. So I went there through the ninth grade. From sixth through ninth [grade], was at that Beretania Street area.

WN: Island Paradise?

KL: Island Paradise School.

WN: Did you go to Mun Lun Chinese-language School?

KL: No, I didn't, although it was right there, I didn't get involved learning my native tongue.

WN: Your parents didn't push you at all?

KL: No, no, they didn't.

WN: (Laughs) Lucky ah? (Laughs)

KL: Yeah, because I am both Chinese [and] Japanese, so they didn't want to. . . . My mom's Japanese, my dad's Chinese, so they didn't want to push either way. Going to either Japanese School. At times, I wish they had. It would have been a big asset now.

(Laughter)

KL: With all the Asian influx.

WN: Yeah, yeah.

KL: So, but no, I didn't [go to Chinese-language School].

WN: Oh, okay. So you said you got a scholarship to 'Iolani?

KL: Yeah.

WN: What kind of scholarship?

KL: Fortunately, I was always big. And when it came to ninth grade, they had asked me if I was willing, you know, to maybe take the entrance exam to 'Iolani. I did. I passed. So, they then provided me with help, financial help, which was a scholarship to go to school there. So I went to school there because my parents could not afford to send me to 'Iolani just having to pay the tuition, so I was able to get a scholarship, go to school, play ball, and then graduate.

WN: What kind ball? Football?

KL: Yeah, football. I played football.

WN: Who was the coach at that time?

KL: A coach initially, who had taken an interest was Harold Silva, who then moved on to Kahuku [High School]. Then after him came Tommy Kaulukukui, who coached me through my years at 'Iolani. Part of what had happened was, Tommy Kaulukukui, Sr. used to run a clinic for just anyone who was interested and at that clinic I was there. Fortunately, they had seen potential so they had made a contact with Hal Silva and then after that, when he took over, he said he certainly knew who I was. He took over in my junior year, Tommy Kaulukukui did. So two years I played for him, and one year I played for Hal Silva.

WN: Did you play Pop Warner before?

KL: No. I was too big. I was always too heavy and too big, you know, to play. (WN chuckles.) But I had been very active in sports throughout. And I love---in fact, basketball was my favorite sport. Football came after.

WN: So where did you play these sports?

KL: I played for the church league. First Chinese Church.

WN: Oh, First Chinese Church.

KL: Yeah. I went there since I was a young person, so I played activities there. I played in some of the organized leagues in Mānoa to start with, and then continued in high school. Played intermural as well as played for First Chinese Church.

WN: So you went to 'Iolani, played football. Basketball too?

KL: No. No. See, then I became too big to play basketball for what they wanted anyway.

WN: I'm curious, how big were you? I'm trying to think . . .

KL: Yeah, I was about 5 [foot] 8, 8½ [inches] and about 225 pounds already. Even as a sophomore. So, there were a bunch of us at that time who took the test that went on to play at 'Iolani and then some went to Roosevelt High School, which I considered a private school anyway at that time.

WN: Oh, English-standard [school], yeah?

KL: Yeah, right. So they got district exceptions from all over the place.

WN: Ticky Vasconcellos was . . .

KL: Yeah, he was the coach all through the high school years that I played. He was coach there.

WN: So you went to 'Iolani and then what happened after that?

KL: After I graduated from 'Iolani, I was fortunate again. There was about six of us who were given the opportunity to go to Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, so we were one of the bigger—I guess the first big recruits to go to Linfield College. That was Hugh Yoshida, myself, Tyrone (Kuhns), a few others that went there. We were the first big contingent to go to—Al Wills had started it all, him being the first local boy from Hawai'i to go there, and he

played ball there as well.

WN: So was [UH head football coach Fred] vonAppen there at that time?

KL: VonAppen played---he was younger than us. He came in and played, yeah. I played ball with him one year. Yeah, we know him well. (WN chuckles.) And that's where I also met my wife and we got married up there.

WN: When did you get married?

KL: I got married In 1960. I was a sophomore at that time.

WN: Okay, so let's see. 'Iolani, class of what?

KL: [Nineteen] fifty-eight.

WN: [Nineteen] fifty-eight. And then you went right after that to Linfield.

KL: Right.

WN: What did you major in?

KL: I majored in sociology/psychology.

WN: Did you have any idea at that time what you wanted to do?

KL: Yeah. At that time, because I was heavily involved in the church and the youth group there, I initially [was] either gonna be a youth director in that kind of sense when I first went to school. However, as I did my freshman year, I found out that social work was as interesting and maybe more what I would want to do, and that's where I then started to focus in on going into social work, taking all the sociology courses, psychology courses. So even at that time, [as] a freshman, I already made up my mind what I would like to go into.

So after I graduated from Linfield, I then applied and got into the University of Hawai'i School of Social Work.

WN: Oh, okay, now when was this?

KL: This was in 1963 that I got in there. Graduated from University [of Hawai'i] in '65 with a master's degree in social work.

WN: Nineteen sixty-five. Okay, and then what?

KL: Then, I went to work briefly for the family court. I took on---and worked six months, and passed probation here, and then got offered a position at Pālāma Settlement. So I started working at Pālāma in the [19]60s through the Economic Opportunity Act at that time, the federal government money. Then, I went in as what they called an aggressive worker. In other words, those were workers who worked on the streets with the kids in Mayor Wright [Homes] and the Kalihi-Pālāma area. Fortunately, because of my sports, having been able to work in that area, I did have a smooth transition to the kids there. Plus, I was big, and

that always helps, working in that area. They like size. Plus I coached, and I enjoyed coaching, so I was able to work with the kids. I started coaching basketball at first, working with some of the gang kids, getting them organized. We were fortunate. We were able to be very successful.

Then, as time went on, I worked with the younger kids. Then, I left. I went back to the (shuffling papers)—let's see, wait now. (Pause) I then was able to work with Earlene Piko, who was then at that time, the program director, and I was the supervisor for the—I was promoted to be the supervisor for the social services at Pālama Settlement. Then, we began to devise programs using the academic in order [for the kids] to compete in football, basketball and all the other sports. I've always been able to, because of my upbringing and the scholarship, realize that with the education and with the sports, you can do wonders. And with youngsters there that was a natural. They wanted to play, and this was something for them to do, therefore, they were willing to go through many different changes to do it. And one was to say, "If you wanted to play, you gotta do your academics, you gotta be willing to go ahead and study." And then we started to do this—behavior mod[ification] became a big thing at the time, so we utilized that and provided the programs that I think still run today at Pālama Settlement.

WN: Prior to you coming was that—the behavior mod—was that in focus? Or was that . . .

KL: No. We, between our group, we were able to go ahead and then create that for the settlement. Earlene, myself, and a few others went in. Of course, at that time also, my wife had been working at Pālama Settlement doing their summer fun program. She became a regular staff so we were able to—and that's when John Sharp came on as well. We hired John Sharp to work in that program.

WN: So when you first started at Pālama Settlement in '66, it was with the Economic Opportunity?

KL: Right.

WN: Federal funding.

KL: Right.

WN: When you became the supervisor for social services, was that still under federal funding?

KL: No. I became then on the regular staff.

WN: Oh, I see.

KL: Which was then funded, at that time, by—it wasn't called Aloha United Way. I guess It was called the Honolulu Community Chest—what was it called?

WN: Yeah, something like that.

KL: Yeah, was that group and then became Aloha United Way. So I became a regular staff member not on federal funds.

WN: So who hired you in '66?



KL: Jack Nagoshi hired me, and then after that, Lorin Gill took over as the director when Jack retired and went off to the University of Hawai'i.

WN: Right. So when you first started in '66, what were your impressions of Pālama Settlement?

KL: My impression of Pālama was really low-income area but with a lot of potential. I was excited and I had had opportunity to work in different areas. I mean, like, I always coached, I always handled youth, so for me, that was a big challenge. And to me, kids were kids, and that turned out to be right. It doesn't matter where you come from, you know, given that opportunity. Pālama had the facilities; that was the great part. Even in those days, and I know now it's improved, but even when we were there, that, to me now is like a luxury. Swimming pool, you got a gym, and then we created the game room and did all of that so the kids could come.

WN: So in your opinion, what needed to be done?

KL: I think we needed to ensure that we had workers who were willing to go out to work with the kids, to put in the time and the energy, and that was what fortunately we were able to do. We were able to get a select group of people who had the same goals: to work with the kids and provide for them. As you knew, we were young people out of school, so very high ideals, and fortunately had the energy to go ahead and test out. Pālama gave us that kind of a freedom to go and test out some of our beliefs, and gave us the support to go ahead and create programs. So we created academic achievement programs. We were also able to put into place the in-community treatment program. Both programs still stand, but in the heyday, we were dealing with a lot of kids at that time. We worked with the family court; we had programs with kids coming in from the family court.

WN: Was that considered to be a plum job?

KL: Plum?

WN: Pālama Settlement.

KL: I don't---to me, it was a good job because we had the flexibility to do work.

WN: So you were promised that flexibility when you started. . .

KL: Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah. You were given that opportunity. You were also given the opportunity to learn new things. We weren't hampered by bureaucratic kind of, you know, policies and procedures. What was great was when Jack Nagoshi moved to the university, he took over the Juvenile Delinquency Center so a lot of the kinds of activities and people he brought in from the Mainland to look at new and creative ideas, we were in on the ground floor. With Lorin Gill and Earlene Piko's help, we were able to go ahead and write for grants, work with the courts. The courts wanted programs. We were willing to start programs. So that became a real, to me, positive for wanting to work there. That's how come I stayed for fifteen years there. I enjoyed it. Many of us were working seven days a week.

WN: Okay, one of the plum---one of the advantages too, I would imagine, would be the facilities that you talked about.

KL: Right.



WN: And John Sharp talked about the hot showers and the training table and so forth, yeah?

KL: Yeah.

WN: Was that something that you instituted also?

KL: Yes. We had felt that, what way can we help parents to utilize monies that they had to help their kids and their family to be able to budget? One way was to say that athletes need to eat, you know, certain diet and what we did, we provided a training table for all the kids who were in the program to eat their dinner meal there. What we did was use volunteer families and mothers to come in and cook, so at the same time as we were feeding their kids, we were also showing them menus, how to cook food that was both, not necessarily cheap, but was more inexpensive but very high nutrition. We had a nutritionist come in help prepare it. We were even able to get federal, you know that food monies that the schools got?

WN: Mm hmm.

KL: They were able to provide us that because of what we were doing to help people, you know. Many of them, certainly with their food stamps, could buy anything what we had there. But what we did was we linked it up to how they could best help their youngsters to perform better on the field, because many of them were, you know, they were very proud of their youngsters. They liked football, they like basketball, and hook it up. We were trying to kill two birds with one stone, and we thought we did because many people then began to get those menus that we had, use it at their home. One meal a day, and then they could do this all the time, even when there's no football or basketball. These are things that the whole family can---but it was more, I think, palatable to the people when we did it that way than to say, "Hey, you know, you guys should be eating this kind of food and this kind of food." And what we did too, was we ate the same thing. We would eat with the families, eat with the kids, so that the staff was eating the same foods.

WN: And this was year-round?

KL: This was during the sports. Whatever sports we were doing, we would provide both a learning center and a training table so that the kids would get that kind of. . . . Because we kept them kind of late, so we felt that if they gotta go learning center after, you know, after the football or basketball practice, we gotta have something, and we say, "Hey, this would be a good way to also help parents understand what is nutritional food that their families can eat."

WN: What is the learning center?

KL: The learning center was set up to provide—we would test each kid. Pretest the youngsters to see what level they are in, with a standardized achievement test, and with that we would then provide a baseline. We then got volunteer help from all over—the University of Hawai'i, some of the high schools—to become what we called academic coaches. We had football, basketball coaches, we had academic coaches, who would come in and work one to one with the youngsters. What we did was we train them to use program instructions, and what we did was. . . . Our goal was to guarantee success (coughs) and so we would program them at the lower level and build them up, and that really worked with many of the kids. So in essence, if they weren't functioning in school, and if they were functioning. . . . See, what we did was, we were so confident in what we were doing, we said, "In order to get a grade that count it's

got to be corrected up to 90 percent accuracy," and that's what we got because we were able to do the individualized programming so that we were programming kids for success. That was the key to it, and we certainly got a lot of help and a lot of educational students who were in college came in to provide the tutoring, and they also gained that one-to-one relationship with the kids that they coached. They would make program work for them every day or weekly, and as they finished, they would get—and this, then, authorized them to go to practice. Not to play in the game, but just go to practice. So you know, here you are, earning points to go to practice. This doesn't guarantee you'll be playing in the game, although in a Pop Warner—you know, it was Pop Warner, both basketball and, there was a mandatory [rule] each kid gotta play, but doesn't mandate how many hours, I mean, how many minutes they gotta play, they just gotta get into the game.

WN: But in order to play in the game or to show up or dress for the game, you had to go to practice?

KL: Right. Right.

WN: And in order to go to practice . . .

KL: Practice, you have to do the points. You have to do the work, complete the assignments up to 90 percent correct in accuracy.

WN: And this was based on each individual student?

KL: Yes.

WN: Not a standard.

KL: No. Each student take a test, and wherever they fell, we would start programming them from there. But you know, the average growth when we did the posttest on each kid was a minimum of three grade level increase in that period of time, and some of them was only a three-month period. But it's concentrated, yeah? We concentrated on the area where they were low, we provided them incentives, which was not just only practicing. We had a lot of rewards, we got a lot of different kind of. . . . Even a pat on the back was, for many of them, the best reward they could get. When we did some of the exit—when people left, they said that that's what they remember most, being able to feel successful in the classroom where prior to that, they weren't.

WN: So the program that you had set up was more of an in-house kind of thing?

KL: Yes.

WN: Was there a close relationship with the school? The students' schools?

KL: No. We didn't at that time, except the ones that were [in the] in-community treatment [program] where they were coming because they were sent by the court, those we had. The others was more like a after-school program, which we felt we were the first ones to come up with this. And even now, the Boys & Girls Club [of Honolulu], we went in and taught them so they are continuing this in their work as well.

WN: Okay, what if they are doing well enough to practice and earning points, but what if they were flunking in school?

KL: We would check on that. A good part of the majority of the coaches on the field, were also staff of Pālama. Okay, so I coached, John Sharp coached, and we were full-time staff. That's why I say we worked seven days a week. Games are on Saturdays and Sundays. We would go there too because we had to coach. But, you know, that was just part of the job that we did. So we would be able to follow up on the kids. So if they are doing well, hey, we would check. And sometimes, it became very ticklish how we do this because the logical question is, "How come they can do so well at Pālama and they cannot do well at school?"

We weren't willing to tell the school, "Ey, you don't know how teach. So how come the kids not learning?" So we had to be very careful how we did that and work with the schools to show them what we were doing. Many of them were very, very grateful that we had the opportunity and time to do special tutoring because it did show, because not only did we try to do the academic. We tried to do some of the social behaviors as well because when some of them first started, they couldn't sit down and study. That was never in their repertoire of things to do. So having to sit there for an hour or even a half an hour to do work was a challenge, so they would get rewarded for doing, or even sitting. Start with their sitting down behavior, doing some work, they would get rewarded. Then pretty soon, it became a real, to me, incentive for them, you know. Although we were given little things for them like a star on their paper or little, what we call, you can earn the decal, the scorpion decal, which you can put on your helmet. Not only for playing football, you know, being incentive for you get [recognition] on your helmet, you can earn that for doing academic work. And to us, it didn't matter where you earn it, you've earned, and you can put 'em your helmet to show everybody. So they earn little things.

But that's why it became so intrinsic rather than extrinsic, that they were doing it because they were gaining satisfaction in doing it. You know, some were doing 100 percent work. What a change yeah? Where they were flunking, now they are doing 100 percent and they can show that they can do it. But it's also the skill of having to program them at the level they are at. And, in fact, we started below their level so we assured success and then build them up.

We were so-so, that because both my wife and I worked and had little time, what we did was our kids were given district exceptions to play ball for Pālama because the other leagues, they knew what we were doing, so my kids went through the program as well.

WN: So could anybody even outside of Pālama join the program?

KL: Yeah, and some did just for the educational component. But they would have to get special exception from the league they're in. Some parents felt that their kids needed the extra help, which was the study hall, so they asked, and I don't think anybody got refused.

WN: So they could be living anywhere?

KL: Yeah, then they could come. But then it would be the responsibility of the parents to bring them in and then come pick them—but then they had to go through the exact same thing. You know, you may be a good cook, but training table was part of the program so everybody's treated alike. So they would eat at Pālama.

WN: So basically, it was academic?

KL: Yes.

WN: The kids would have work, that were having problems academically?

KL: Yeah.

WN: Were there, like, good students doing well but maybe needed other kind of help, like maybe social or something?

KL: Those were a rarity, but yeah, they could come in, especially if you live in the area. Kids in the area were given priority to come, so some of them were excellent students, but they still came. They just got better by going through, and they can do their own homework, too. If they have homework, we let them use their homework as their study hall time. So they got---not just they were able to do their homework, they got regimented time to do it, you know, and not being distracted because we had them all in cubicles, they all had their own desk, and they had to maintain some semblance of study hall. I mean, we didn't make it that you gotta be like---it's not a library, shh, shh, shh. So we understood that, so people talked but they cannot goof off.

WN: What age group are we talking about?

KL: We talking anywhere from nine years old through fifteen, and that's the whole range because we had pee-wee, midget, and junior Bantams.

WN: And after that, they would go to their high school to play . . .

KL: High school, yeah. In fact, some of them were in high school, and that's where we had our biggest problem. If anything, some of them could qualify to play JV [junior varsity], but did not want to because they felt that they were getting the educational part too, so they would prefer coming to Pālama Settlement and playing in Pālama. So, and we would encourage them, "Hey, go play for your school. That's where it's at."

But then, if they says, "No, then I not going play anything."

I'd say, "Better you play here and do the academic than don't do nothing." But we will encourage them to go play for their schools, especially when you're fourteen, fifteen, you could play. But many of 'em didn't at that time.

WN: And when did they go to study hall?

KL: They went to study hall right after school and then after practice. We would be open up till nine, nine o'clock in the evening. Some would be able to come right after school, they do their homework, they go to---we *pau* practice by six. So six o'clock to seven they would eat, and then they get from seven to nine if they wanted to. They don't have to. If they can get their work done in the afternoon, fine. It's just that they got a set of work that they gotta get done to qualify them to practice, you know, for the next week, so. And if you can't do it---we were very strict about that though, I don't care if you're the star player. If you don't do it, you don't practice; you don't practice, you don't play. And they understood that, so everybody was

on the same page, and it wasn't even a matter of, "Oh, can you make an exception?" There was no exceptions, and that was good because they were staff members. You get volunteer coaches, everybody wanna make exceptions, you know, "Aw, give 'em a break."

But we say, "Hey, we follow through. We're committed to this kind of a program."

WN: And you know, you said that you coached for a while, and then eventually you hired John Sharp to coach?

KL: Well, we---even when we hired John Sharp while I coached, John took the older kids, I took the midget, and then I took the pee-wee. I took the pee-wee because we felt that that was the most difficult age, and the top age and the middle one, we felt was not as critical. The top one because they could then get into trouble and John was excellent in working with kids in that age group because he also was a high profile player himself, and played professional little while. They really respected him for that, and he was a super good, excellent football coach at that time.

WN: About parents, were there problems with parents? What was more difficult, working with the kids or working with their parents?

KL: More with the parents, helping the parents to understand that this was very important. For many of them, education was not important, that's how come it became a problem in our area. A study was done in Pālama, in particular, the Pālama area. Out of, I think about fifteen, we rank first in about eleven of the not-so-good kind of stats that you want, like high crime, low education, low income, all of that kind of stuff. So trying to re-train people to look at that, but once we got them to understand, and they could see their youngsters producing, they became the best ambassadors for the program. And finally, we never had any kind of problems that you would find in programs that are run, you know, purely voluntary where they grumble about how much my time my kid play. Because they [kids at Pālama] were earning their way to play and understanding that that was more important than playing the game.

But we tell our kids, "The game is important because if it wasn't important, we don't keep score." So you know, you would want to win, but if you lose, that's all right, but you strive to win because you keep score. If it was just to play the game, you don't keep score. But we didn't have that many problem about, "My son never get enough playing time." We tried to ensure that the kids do play, you know, everybody get a chance to get in.

But we also---because we were a staff, we could call many meetings, and parents would come to the meetings, because that was part of our job. And we do home visits, we do like a social study on all the home, what the home is like. We look at other areas where we gotta---as a settlement doing social service---other areas that we need to be aware of, we need to provide maybe other kind of additional help. So it was not just the sports activity, you have to look at the family. But all under the premise that we're trying to do the football, but we did a lot of other kind of work with the family.

WN: Was this going at---this kind of program going on anywhere else in Hawai'i?

KL: We were the first, and then in it's entirety, I think, Boys & Girls Club [of Honolulu], about ten years later began to look at that. But no, we were. . . . And we were fortunate, we got a lot of support from the media, it was in writing, it came out in the news. And in fact, just



recently, I saw it again on TV, showing the kind of program using football and sports as a way to get to the kids.

WN: Did any of this---did you gain any of this while you were going to school at all? I mean, where did you get the idea or the concept . . .

KL: Yeah, well, I think we—you know, Earlene certainly has a very athletic family. Her son is a swimmer, an all-American swimmer, Bill Chambers, who runs College Opportunit[ies Program] now at the UH, and was active in sports. Myself, who's been in sports and always felt that sports was a conduit to get something, having actually done it, being able to get scholarships. So it's just utilizing that. And then she was an education psychologist, so she—in terms of her psychology—she wasn't a psychologist, but she did educational psych and counseling, so putting that together, she was the one that created that kind of idea. And Jack Nagoshi helped a lot with the behavior mod. He brought that in, he brought in the top people to come in and then teach us.

WN: Being a sports person too, were you tempted—or not, well no, I shouldn't say tempted—was it frustrating for you sometimes like, "We gotta win this game, and boy, the best player's not doing too well in his academics." (Laughs)

KL: No. Funny no because we, I guess, felt comfortable that we were able to handle that kind of thing. And we all love to win, and fortunately, the youngsters we dealt with were very, very hungry, and so we were always in there. You know, like for instance, I was fortunate enough to coach basketball there, and we went eighty-eight games straight without a loss, you know, in regular season. And John Sharp has always had championship teams. So, you know, we were lucky. And the kids were good. They were super athletes because they were hungry and they were willing to learn. Those are the ones that you say jump, they no ask you why. They just ask how high. Whereas, I coached in other leagues. I coached at Kalāheo High School on the varsity level. I coached at Kamehameha [Schools] on the intermediate level. They were different. They got little more options than our kids in the Kalihi-Pālama area. For the Kalihi-Pālama area, that was their outlet. Other places, football is nice, but they can do other things too, so that was the difference I had seen. How hungry the youngsters were.

WN: Let me just turn this.

## END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so you were there for fifteen years?

KL: Yes.

WN: So when did you leave Pālama Settlement?

KL: I left in 1979. I had felt that the programs were already functioning. I wanted to try new activities, so I then went little while to Catholic Charities to work in their substance abuse. Because through, you know, my work wasn't just the football and sports; we did the social

service and the in-community. We provided the court with that and a lot of it was with drug kids that we worked with. So daytime, we're running the in-community treatment program till about 2:30, and then 2:30 to 9:00 we were running the after-school program, which was called Pākōlea at that time. And so I felt it was time to go look, and I was also looking to get into the state, you know, for some security and retirement. Pālama Settlement is great, but the retirement program isn't the greatest as a private agency. They didn't have a very good. . . . So, I was able to work little while, while I was applying to the state, to work at Catholic Charities and I worked there very briefly, for about three or four months, and then I got hired at family court as a program specialist.

WN: In 1979?

KL: Uh, yeah. And then what I did was I worked—actually, coming in March of '80 is when I came. And then, what I did was work as a program specialist for about almost a year, and then I got transferred to go run the detention facility [The Detention Home] to become the superintendent of the detention facility.

WN: Where is that? Waimānalo?

KL: (Coughs) Alder Street.

WN: Oh, okay.

KL: Okay. And was able to go over there for approximately five years, and then came here to become—I got appointed as the family court director.

WN: In 1985?

KL: Yeah.

WN: Family court director. That's what you are now?

KL: Right.

WN: Okay. So in the fifteen years you were in Pālama, how would you evaluate what you accomplished?

KL: I never evaluate what I accomplished. I think it was always a team approach and what we did and what we accomplished was to provide, to me, some very innovative programs at that time, for the people and the kids in the Kalihi-Pālama area. We were fortunate to be able to get the funding to do this as well as to provide for, I think, the state, one of the few in-community treatment programs that dealt with both education and behavior change for the youngsters that were under court supervision. So those, to me, were the two key areas that we were able to provide help in, and that was, to me, the beginning of these in-community treatment. And then moving to alternative schools that they have. We're one of the few that started it and then the schools picked it up because we did work closely with the schools, because the idea was to re-entry back into the schools.

WN: So when you left in '79, has it continued?



KL: Yes.

WN: The same program?

KL: Yes. Not as broad as when we were there. I guess funding, as you know the state situation is less so they have less staff. But they have---the semblance of the program, the philosophy, still there, but when we were there in the heyday of when monies were available, we were big. We had all the staffing we need, and we did take in much more kids than they do now. Like for football, we had at least a hundred and something kids in three different teams. Now they don't have---I don't think they have that.

We didn't have to charge fees for kids to play. It wasn't a problem, whereas, some of the pop warner teams, you gotta play some entry, registration fee. Federal government helped. We had private sector help. Cec[il] Heftel was one of the biggest supporters of our program, and at that time, he had a share as well, in Western Airlines, so that helped.

WN: How would you evaluate Pālama Settlement today?

KL: I think Pālama Settlement today is going back to the roots. They doing much more what we initially had begun to do, to work with the community. For a while there, they didn't. But I think now, with Bob Omura back there, they have begun to look back and provide for the community.

WN: And you felt that at one time it wasn't like that?

KL: At one time, I felt that they were struggling to do that, and you know. And it comes and goes in terms of looking to what their identity will be, so there are a lot of programs but not necessarily meeting the needs of the community. And I think the community spoke up as well, so now they're back to the community. [Bob] is much more for the community.

WN: Do you think it's a combination of getting the right people there and funding?

KL: Yeah. And I think that getting the right people there is more important than the funding. I think you can make do and make many creative nonfunding kind of issues, but you do need people that believes in the philosophy of, and the mission of Pālama, and it cannot be just a job. For many of us, it was not just a job. It was a way of life. In fact, we lived there. In fact, many of us brought our families there so, in other words, to bond with our kids, they had to come and be in the program (WN laughs) because we were so involved in the program itself.

WN: Well I know John Sharp lived on the grounds.

KL: That's right, he lived on the---many of the staff lived on the grounds. I didn't, but then, I lived in Kailua, but my kids would come on the bus after school, and they would be in the program as well, they would go through it.

WN: Okay, well, very good, thank you very much.

KL: All right. Great.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **Reflections of Pālama Settlement**

**Volume I**

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